THE REDEMPTION

4479 a. 21

of time, or

A SERMON

containing very good remedies for them that haue miſ-ſpent their time: ſhewing how they ſhould redeeme it comfortably. By M. W. Maſter of Arts.

¶ Pſal. 90. 12.

Lord teach vs to number our dayes, that wee may apply our hearts vnto wiſdome.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Epheſ. 5. 16.

Redeeme the time, becauſe the daies are euill.

WHileſt I bethought my ſelfe of a portion of holy writ to treate vpon, that might hold ſome agreement with the preſent ſeaſon: this ſhort ſentence offred it ſelfe vnto my minde. At the firſt I reiected it as impertinent, but after a ſecond and more ſerious view, me thought it was the moſt fit Scripture that I could make choice of on this occaſion. For howbeit, it hath pleaſed the common ſort of men, to ſtile theſe feſtiuall daies with the name of good times: yet by reaſon of the groſe abuſage, to which the corruption of men hath made them ſubiect, they may very well receiue an alteration of their title, and in a quite contrary phraſe be termed euill dayes, yea,

and (that in the higheſt degree of all) the worſt of dayes. Now in this time wherein time is ſo lauiſhly miſ-ſpent, I hope it cannot ſeeme inconuenient or vntimely, to giue a breefe exhortation concerning the right vſe of time.

Theſe words which I haue read, lead vs into that path: being part of an exhortation begun in the former verſe. There, in generall hee had exhorted them to bee moſt ſtrictly carefull of their wayes, and to direct their courſe of life in ſuch reſpectiue ſort, as they might deſerue the name of wiſe, not vnwiſe men: commending herein vnto them and vs, that very ſtrictneſſe and preciſeneſſe, wherewith the world hath now long ſince pickt a quarrell and falne out. And beecauſe this was but a generall rule, hee ſeconds it with ſome particulars, by which wee may bee led on to the like inſtances in other matters. The firſt of theſe ſpecials is placed in the well diſpoſing of time in this verſe. Where, hauing ſet downe the duetie of Chriſtians in this behalfe, he backs it with a reaſon; which in it ſelfe

and to a ſpirituall vnderſtanding, is moſt ſound and firme, but to the carnall iudgement of a carnall man is void of all ſoundneſſe and reaſon. The dutie is, to buy out the time, to traffique with it, as men do with wares, and when it is in other mens hands (as I may ſay) to giue ſomething (yea any thing) that we may get it into our owne hands, for good vſes. Hee meanes that we ſhould vſe our greateſt care and diligence (euen that which wee would imploy in matters moſt neerely concerning vs) to win all the time wee poſsibly can, for the duties of Religion and Godlineſſe. His argument to confirme this exhortation, is taken from the contrary (if wee looke on it with a carnall eye, it will ſeeme in conſequent, halting and not able to beare vp the concluſion) It is, *becauſe the dayes are euill.* That is, the cuſtomes and manners of the greateſt part of men that liue, are wicked and lewd. Now beecauſe the number and route of the world is ſo ſtrongly bent to all manner of vngodlineſſe, as that they haue euen tainted the time it ſelfe,

and corrupted the very dayes; the Apoſtle would therefore haue the Epheſians, and all other Chriſtians, ſo much the more induſtrious, to take all ſeaſons and occaſions for the bettering of themſelues. Beecauſe other men are naught and ſtarke naught, therefore ought faithfull Chriſtians to bee good, and very good, and to turne all opportunities to this ende and vſe, that they may bee furtherances to make them good.

The world would haue framed a more crooked concluſion from this ground, and haue ſayd: becauſe men are ſo generally and extreemely bad, (for that is noted in ſaying: *the dayes are euill*) wee muſt therefore needes ſtraine curteſie a little, and not bee too ſtrict, leaſt we ſhould be ouermuch different from other men and incurre the by-name of Singulariſts. But the Apoſtle tels vs, that becauſe the waies of men are exceſsiuely diſordered & full of naughtineſſe, wee ſhould beſtow ſo much the more paines, that we might not be caried downe the violent ſtreame & de-

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luge of vnſanctified liuing, & vnto this intent ſhould earneſtly watch and diligently take all good occaſions of getting and doing good. You ſee in part the meaning of this ſhort ſentence which containeth a few words indeede, but is ſtuft full of worthy matter, which according (as my weakeneſſe can attaine) I ſhall ſtriue to ſpread beefore your eyes, vnfolding it in ſuch manner as that you may perceiue the things that lay therein cloſely wrapped vp before.

The point which the words offer to our conſideration at the firſt ſight, is this; that all Chriſtians ought to be very good husbands for their time. Good houres & opportunities are marchandize of the higheſt rate, and price: and whoſoeuer will haue his ſoule thriue, muſt not ſuffer any of theſe bargains of time to paſſe him, but muſt buy vp, & buy out, all the minutes therof. No man of trade can be more carefull to chaffer & deale in the moſt gainfull things that pertain to his occupation, then we ſhould be to deale in this ware of time, wherein euery Chriſtian is, or ſhould Doctrine.

bee a well taught, and practiſed dealer. As ſuch kinde of men (if they can eyther make money themſelues, or borrow it of their friends, yea or elſe (ſuch is the greedineſſe of men) take it vp of the Vſurer) will not let ſlip any commoditie, wherein they haue skill, and are perſwaded, that it wil bring in large profit within a ſhort time of returne: ſo ſhould euery good man vſe all diligence (for diligence is in ſtead of mony here, and care in ſtead in coine) to gain euery day, euery houre, and euery minute (ſo much as may be poſsible) from al vnprofitable actions, & ouer-worldly affaires, to beeſtow the ſame on the duties of Religion and godlineſſe. This being ſuch a parcell of ware, as if it be wiſely beſtowed, when it is heedfully gotten, will come in againe with both hands full of profit for recompence of ones paines taken in that behalfe. This ſelfe ſame exhortation, this ſame Apoſtle deliuers in ſo many words vnto the Colloſsians, when he ſaith: *Walke wiſely towards them that are without, and redeeme the time.* See how *Paul*, an old,

Col. 4. 5.

beaten,

beaten, and experienced dealer in these matters for the soule, doth neither forget, nor neglect to teach his apprentises (as I may call them) the very secrets & misteries of the trade of good liuing, wherof this is one, euen the thriftie laying out, and getting in of time: which being repeted to the Collossians, as wel as deliuered to these Ephesians) comes with a double charge vpon our minds, to make vs heedful in these bargaines. And that excellent petition of *Moses* the man of God, doth meane nothing else but this, when in other words hee saith: *Teach me so to number my daies* Psa. 90 12. *that I may apply my heart to wisedome.* For he meanes that God would inable him with grace, so sercously to consider of the shortnes of this life, and the transitorinesse of this present world; as that he might take all occasions, and vse all meanes to bend his hart to the seeking and obtaining of the true knowledge of God and himselfe, and so the true feare of God, which is the beginning of wisdome. And the want of this husbandry Christ doth mournfully lament in the

citie of Ieruſalem, ſetting out vnto vs alſo, the greeuous and diſmall effects, and conſequents of this heedleſneſſe, in regard of taking time, and vſing the fit
Luk.19.42 opportunitie, *O* (ſaith hee) *if thou hadſt euen knowen, at the leaſt in this thy day, thoſe things that pertaine vnto thy peace. But now are they hid from thine eyes. &c.* *q.d.* Hitherto thou haſt had the meanes to learne what made for thy good, and what might haue preuented thy ruine; and if thou haddeſt but euen at this laſt houre marked and conſidered them, thou mighteſt haue eſcaped theſe fearefull iudgements: but now that thou haſt beene all this while wanting to god, he will hereafter be wanting to thee, thou ſhalt neuer haue any true knowledge of theſe things, nor euer auoid theſe miſerable calamities. Becauſe they did not vſe time whilſt time did ſerue, to repent, and turne to God, therefore after it was too late, God would not heare them, nor helpe them. They that refuſe the good offer of a good bargaine from God, ſhal not haue this bargaine offred againe at their pleaſure, yea, God will

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not deale with them at their leasure, that would not deale with him at his leasure. And wisdome in *Salomons* wise booke of Prouerbs, speakes to this effect of vngodly men, that when their miserie comes, shee will laugh at them, beecause when shee gaue her good instructions to preuent this misery, they laughed at her. The neglect of taking the fit time and occasion to follow wisdomes holesome counsell and come to her when she cals: plungeth scornfull men, into such a depth of misery, as that there is no meanes of recouery. For when wisdome laughes a man to scorn, whither shall he repaire for succour? And to this intent (of husbanding our time well) notable is the saying of the same Apostle in an other place, bidding vs: *whilst we haue time*, doe good to all. As much as if hee had told vs: that time must so much the rather bee bestowed in doing good (and then it is redeemed) becausse we haue no such great store of it, as we do foolishly imagine. The vessel of time is not so full (as most men dreame) nay it will sone come to the

Pro. 1. 24. 25. 26.

Gal. 6. 10.

the bottome. It is then wisedome to spare betime, and not in the very dregs and lees. All these places doe in most plaine manner confirme the point, viz. that euery good Christian must be very sauing, and thriftie of his time, that is, must conuert all occasions to the good of his soule, and furthering of his reckoning, not suffring by his will any houre, or minute (more then needes must) to bee layd out in any thing but matters that may fit him for a better life. This is in truth to haue ones conuersation in heauen, when one vpon the least occasion is ready to make one step further thitherwards: when one giues all his time to God, but so much as may be more especially to religious exercises, and such things as doe after a peculiar sort make for a better life, not letting slip any meanes of furtherance that is offred him this way.

Now for your better direction in this sauing thrift, and for the more full vnderstanding of this point, and more easie practising of this needefull dutie, I purpose to stand some while in shew-

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ing these two things. First, from what time is to be redeemed. Secondly, what the time is which must bee redeemed. For the first, we must vnderstand, that there be fiue huckſters of time, very cormorants, and ingroſers of this precious ware, which, betwixt them (for the most part) get vp al the houres of mens liues, not ſuffring the ſoule to enioy ſo much as an houre for it owne vſe, vpon the beſt occaſion to benefit it ſelfe. These theeues, when I haue told you their names. I will deſcribe more at large. They bee, firſt, vaine ſports. Secondly, vaine ſpeeches. Thirdly, immoderate ſleeping or ſluggiſhnes. Fourthly, vaine thoughts. Laſtly, immoderate following of worldly buſineſſe, and affaires, Play, Twatling, Sleeping, fooliſh thinking, exceſſiue rooting in the earth. Now for these fond ſports (amōgſt which I comprehēd riotous feaſting & belly-cheare, a companion of gamming for the most part, and alſo that tiffling, and womanniſh diſeaſe of curiouſneſſe in putting on apparrell) for theſe, I ſay, it is eaſie to proue that they do eat vp theſe good houres,

houres, which otherwise would much inrich the soule of man. *Salomon* the wisest of meer men that liued since *Adam*, hath set it downe as a sure rule (that neuer failes, scarce euer admits exception)

Pro. 21. 17. *That hee which loues pastime shall bee poore, and he that loues wine and oyle shal not be rich.* If this saying be vnderstood onely of the body it is most true. For these things will make a man extreemly needy in the midst of large possessions, and plentious reuenues. But if wee apply it to the soule (as I see not cause why it may not be applyed to both) it is most vniuersally true. Hee that is so wedded to his pleasures, and besotted vpon vaine delights, as that the current of his life is carried that way, or else too great a part of the streame is turned thither; shal be destitute of vnderstanding, shall haue a naked, ragged, tottred, soule; and that comes because hee hath not vsed his time well, by the right imployment whereof he might haue got wealth for his better part, I meane vnto his mind and heart. A thread-bare heart needy of knowledge comes from a voluptuous

luptuous life ſtuffed with pleaſures. And the Prophet *Iſaiah* cries out with a wofull and a bitter cry againſt theſe which had the Timbrell, the Pipe, and the Harp in their feaſts, but would not regard the work of the Lord. All their daies were taken vp in eating & drinking, in banqueting and feaſting, in good cheer and merry making. So that there was no time to meditate and thinke on theſe afflictions wherby God did warne them to repentance and amendment, which is moſt contrary to this dutie of redeeming the time, for all this time is euen loſt and caſt away. And had wee no other proofe then our owne experience in this behalfe, would it not manifeſtly conuince, that he which deſires to redeem the time, muſt fly theſe vaine delights & ſports? For do we not plainly ſee what a canker it is in a number of mens liues, when many dayes they beſtow three or foure houres together, yea, halfe the day, if not the whole, in dicing, carding, bowling, ſhouell-bord, or the like idle (if not wicked) exerciſes; doth not this waſt and poure forth Iſai. 5. 12.

time

time ouer lauiſhly? Or can that man haue ſo much reſt and quiet, or ſo much fitnes & opportunitie to do good to his ſoule, as his wiſe care in cutting of theſe needleſſe recreations (or vexations rather) would haue afforded him? For theſe vaine pleaſures are not alone miſcheeuous hinderers of this thrift, in that they conſume the very houres thēſelues; but as much, or more alſo in that they diſſettle the heart, and pull the affections out of ioynt, ſo that a man is driuen to take as much paines to ſet his heart to a good exerciſe, as would well haue diſpatched the dutie, had hee not beene thus vnfitted. Now what a miſerable loſſe is it when a man is robbed of his time, and of his heart both at once? And by both kept from reading, praying, meditating, examining his heart, or any ſuch good exerciſe for his ſoules aduantage. Wherfore if any man would ſo preuent theſe vaine & fooliſh ſports, that they ſhould not ſpoile him of his heart and houres: let him obſerue theſe two rules in his ſports, and then he ſhall doe well in theſe reſpects.

First,

First, (this being presupposed that he doe not vse any recreations but those which he can proue to be in themselues lawfull) first, I say, for the beginning of recreation, let euery man know, that recreation must follow labour, for the most part, or if at any time it goe before it, it must be very little, onely to fit one for labour. The Lord allowes a man no sport, though neuer so lawfull in it selfe, vntill such time as his body or mind do stand in neede of it, cheefly when they haue beene busied in some such honest affaires, as by wearying them, haue made them vnfit for further labour, so that they must againe be fitted thereto by recreation. Vntil paines-taking haue made the body or minde, not so well able to take paines, there is no allowance ordinarily for recreation. All our sports and recreations, if we wil vse them well, (I speake of those which are lawfull) must bee to our body or minde, as the mowers whet-stone or rifle is to his syth, to sharpen it when it growes dull. He that when his syth is dulled, wil not (vpon a desire to doe more worke)

take time to whet it, ſhall cut leſſe, and with more paine, & more vnhandſomely then he need to doe: ſo he that when his body or mind is tired or heauie, will not vſe ſome honeſt refreſhing, ſhall doe leſſe, and with leſſe dexteritie then he might. But on the other ſide, if the mower ſhould doe nothing from morning to noone, or from noone to night but whet, whet, whet, rubbing his ſyth, he would both marre the ſyth, and bee counted an idle worke-man alſo, for looſing his dayes work: ſo he that will run after the moſt honeſt delights when neither the wearineſſe of his body, nor heauines of his minde requires the ſame (but onely vpon a fond luſt, or longing after them) ſhall in time deſtroy his wit, and ſtrength, and in the meane ſeaſon, maruailous vnthriftilie miſ-ſpend his time. Therefore let not a man beginne the day with play, though neuer ſo lawfull, vnleſſe his body or minde require ſome neceſſarie exerciſe to make it more apt for his calling. Hee that ſets into the day ſportingly, ſhall bee ſure to go through it, either lumpiſhly or ſinfully,

fully, much more if he ſpend all the day from morning to night in playing, let it be neuer ſo much holy day, or haue he what other excuſe he wil. This rule is for the beginning of ſports.

The ſecond is for the meaſure and continuance of them, where this is a generall and a firme direction: That it is not lawfull for a man in an ordinary courſe, to ſpend more time in any paſtime vpon any day, then in religious exerciſes, I meane cheefely priuate religious exerciſes, I ſay, it is vtterly vnlawfull to beſtow a larger time any day vpon the moſt lawfull delight, then in priuate religious exerciſes, or at leaſt in a cuſtomable courſe ſo to doe. This is plainely proued by that which Chriſt ſpeakes to vs, ſaying: *Firſt, ſeeke the kingdome of God and the righteouſneſſe thereof.* You ſee here commanded to prefer the ſeeking of heauen before any other thing whatſoeuer, to let that haue the cheef place in our ſoules and in our liues. Now he that firſt ſeekes the kingdome of heauen, cannot beſtow more time in ſports of any ſort, then in thoſe Mat. 6. 33.

things which doe directly make for the obtayning of eternall life, and that righteouſneſſe which will bring one thereunto, ſuch as are hearing and reading the word, praying, meditating, examining the heart, conferring, and the like. And ſurely this is a moſt equall thing, that the moſt needful duty ſhould haue the moſt time beſtowed vpon it. Yea, & it is a moſt eaſie rule to all ſorts of men, that haue ſeaſoned their hearts with the true feare of God. For if a mans calling lye in bodily works, then the very exerciſes of religion are a refreſhing to his body, in that he doth for the ſpace while they continue deſiſt from his bodily labour (and his calling affords ſufficient ſtirring of the body for health) ſo that if he be religiouſly minded, and haue indeed ſet his delight on God, he may well giue as much time to theſe actions, as to any carnall ſports. But if any mans calling lye in ſtudy, or ſuch like labour of the minde, firſt, the change is a great refreſhing, and varietie a delight; and then there bee religious exerciſes, which will refreſh the minde as well as

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any ſports, and for ſo much exerciſe as health requires, it is not long in vſing, becauſe nature is here, as in other matters content with a little, howſoeuer men ſeeke excuſes by belying her: ſo that at the leaſt, an equall portion of time muſt be allotted to God, and religion, as to ſports, and delights, euen of ſtudents, if they will firſt ſeek the kingdome of God. Therefore let a man meaſure out the time of ſporting, and recreating himſelfe, by the time hee takes to pray, to read, to meditate, to ſing Pſalmes, to confer of good things, or the like, and know that he hath not libertie from God, to imploy ordinarily ſo much time, neuer to imploy one minute more, in the moſt vnoffenſiue ſports, then in theſe ſeruices of God. Now let a man conforme himſelfe to theſe two rules. Begin not play till need of body or minde exact it. Continue not ſports longer then a man hath or ſhall continue ſome godly priuate exerciſe of religion, and he ſhall ſaue his time well from this firſt theefe.

Now comes to bee conſidered the

next ſpender or rather robber of time, that is, Idle twatling or babling. And concerning this our Sauiour Chriſt deales plainely with vs ſaying: *That of euery idle word which men ſhall ſpeak, they ſhall giue account at the day of iudgement.* Mat. 12. 36. Think well of this ſentence and lay vp euery word. Thou muſt not alone giue account of thy worke, but alſo of thy words: thou muſt not onely bee called to a reckoning for mouing of thy hand, foote or whole body, but of thy tongue alſo, & that not alone for wicked words, ſinfull words, harmeful words, ſpeeches in themſelues infectious and rotten; but for idle and waſt words; and not onely for a number of idle words, for a whole throng or fleete of them, but for euery idle word. Now then if there be an account to be giuen, and a reckoning to bee made for theſe rubbiſh ſpeeches; iudge if it bee not a want of redeeming the time, to lay it out in ſuch a thing, as will bring a ſore and heauie burthen afterwards without repentance to caſt it off; & iudge if he which makes much of time, had not neede take much heed

of this ill-ſpent breath. Not alone then wicked ſpeaking (when one belcheth forth lewd and filthy words) nor ſlanderous and backbiting talke (when one whiſpers of his neighbours faults behinde his backe, vttering perhaps alſo lying reports, and fathering that vpon him which he neuer did or meant) but euen vaine, needleſſe, and vnprofitable words (which tend to no good or wholeſome vſe for the ſoule or body) are a miſ-ſpending of time and contrary to this precept, and therefore alſo to bee ſhunned of him that is this way thriftily diſpoſed. No man can talke idlely, but he caſts himſelfe vpon a double damage, euen the loſſe of a word, and the loſſe of time, two great loſſes, what euer men imagine of them. And therefore the Apoſtle *Paul* alſo findes fault with a certaine ſort of women that were pratlers, which would goe from houſe to houſe twatling and babling out frothy ſpeech, that was good for nothing, which fault he condemnes as a matter ſomething worſe then idleneſſe, or doing nothing, when one talks toyes

or trifles, and ſpeakes ſhadowes or gawds that yeeld no profit. Such twatling cuts out the heart of good time, for it hath ſeldome any meaſure, it creepes by little and little ouer a great part of the day and ſometimes of the night. How many winter nights doe men ſuffer themſelues to be robbed of by this childiſh babling? And in the fourth verſe of this Chapter, the Apoſtle forbids fooliſh ſpeaking & ieſting. The one is a rouing diſcourſe, gathering together a great deale of chaffie geere that will feed no man;a buſie,but abſurd proſecuting of a headleſſe and footleſſe tale (as wee may call it in our phraſe.) The other is a ſetting of ones ſelfe,and ſharpning of his wit, to coine pretty and wittie ſcoffes and conceits that may moue laughter,& for this end onely. Both theſe are condemned, as vnlawfull,and vnbeſeeming Chriſtians. There muſt be a difference made betwixt a ſmooth and pleaſant vttering of ones mind in ſeemly phraſes,and good and delightfull termes and manner: And this whetting of the wit to bandie

Eph.5.4.

and

and toſſe ſharpe and briniſh taunts and quirks.

Now this pleaſantneſſe of the moſt honeſt ſort is not to bee vſed as a cuſtome, but in the nature of a refreſhing, when men are dulled, for better matter. For laughter being a power of Gods creating, and holeſome to the body, and therefore lawfull, it cannot bee vnlawfull in a ſeemely ſort, harmleſly to moue laughter by words, but it muſt not bee ieſting, one muſt not giue himſelfe to it, and make it his occupation for an houre or two together. Now none can be ignorant, how great a hinderance this vaine ſpeech is to the well imploying of time. For doe we not ſee that in many places whole dayes are caſt away in the deepe gulfe of rouing, and vnprofitable runnagate babling to no purpoſe? And that whole meales are deuoured in gibing, and ieſting, if without taking the ſacred name of god in vaine, and hurting ones brothers name (which is very ſeldome) yet exceſsiuely, and not without thruſting out better matter, which is a greeuous fault.

Wherefore that we may be well armed againſt this robber, let vs obſerue diligently theſe two rules.

Firſt, let vs make conſcience of our words, and of the mouing of our tongue, knowing it to be a neceſſarie duty that God hath impoſed vpon vs to haue our words alwaies gracious, and ſeaſoned with ſalt alwaies good for the matter, and tempered with wiſedome for the manner. Which precept the Apoſtle ads preſently after this, of redeeming the time (to the Colloſsians) as a notable part of it. The Law of grace then, muſt bee the bridle of our tongue, and wiſdome muſt raigne in our mouthes, ſo that wee ſpeake nothing but that which may be for ſome profit, to our owne or others ſoule or body, being fitly tempered to the preſent circumſtances of time, place, &c. where and when we ſpeake. For the words are gracious, not alone when they tend to the further edification of the ſoule in ſome matter of religion, but alſo when they be buſied about ones honeſt outward affaires and lawfull calling, this being a great

Col. 4. 5.

great furtherance to Godlineſſe that a man know how (and accordingly practiſe it) to follow his calling with dexteritie and wiſdome. Now he that would not haue vnneceſſarie trifling words ſteale into his heart & out of his mouth, and ſo ſpoile him of good ſeaſons, muſt ſet it downe as a thing to which his conſcience is bound (as well as not to lye, ſweare or ſlander) not to ſpeak one word, whereof hee cannot giue ſome reaſon from the good that he doth aime at in ſpeaking of it. And euery man muſt know that hauing let ſlip ſuch a word, he hath committed ſuch a ſin, as makes him liable to Gods iudgement, and to the ſentence of condemnation. The want of reſoluing the heart thus, cauſeth many to take libertie to their tongues, (and harmefull libertie it is) and yet to thinke they haue done no harme to themſelues in ſo doing. And therefore the common excuſe of ſuch twatlers is this: I hope that it is no harme: yea, but what good was it? If it were not directed to ſome good, it hath done harme, for it hath broken Gods com-

mo

commandement & ſet thy ſelfe deeper in debt then thou waſt before, thou haſt one treſpaſſe more to anſwere for before Gods tribunall, no man ſhall euer auoide this puddle, that will not be perſwaded it is a damnable ſin to ſtep into it. Firſt, then labour to conuince thine heart, and frame thy practiſe to this rule in all ſpeaking.

Secondly, for honeſt comely mirth in ſpeech, (beſides that it muſt not reliſh of luſt, nor ſauour of mallice and profaneneſſe, for then it is worſe then idle words) it ought to bee bounded with this rule, namely, that it bee vſed as a meanes to quicken our ſelues or others againſt ſome naturall heauines or deadneſſe, by which the heart is made vnapt for better conference and other exerciſes of more profitable vſe; and when this effect is brought to paſſe, that laughter hath ſcattered the miſt of dulneſſe from of the heart and minde (or if no ſuch occaſion bee offred) then let mirth and naturall laughter giue place to his betters, otherwiſe comming into a continued cuſtome and ſhould ring

out

out more needefull communication, that takes the name and nature of ieſting, and is a thing much vnbeſeeming the ſtaidneſſe of a Chriſtian. Thus the tongue may bee bound from dealing falſely with the heart, and couſening the ſoule of good houres, and occaſions.

Now followes the third deuourer of time, & that is immoderate ſleeping or ſluggiſhneſſe. The wiſe king *Salomon*, bare a great hatred to this theefe, and giues many warnings & caueats whereby men might learne to take heed of it. The bed is as a very cunning, and ſlye couſenour, that vſeth a pleaſing tricke to deceiue a man, and robs him vnder ſhew of friendſhip. Now *Salomon* hath made a moſt fit deſcriptiō of a ſluggard caught by the wiles of ſleep and ſloth, ſetting him out to the life. *Prou.6.9.10.* Pro.6.9. 11. Where hee brings him in roming 10.11. himſelfe and rubbing his eyes with an vnwilling hand, vttering broken and ſleepy ſentences as one not halfe awake. Firſt, he cals him vp (as it were) ſaying: *How long wilt thou ſleepe, when*

wilt

wilt thou riſe out of thy ſleepe? As if he had ſaid: *Ho,* ſir, it is time to get vp, what not out of your bed yet? at this time of the day? Then mark the drowſie, ſlumbring, and ſenceleſſe anſwere: *A little ſleepes, a little ſlumbers* (For the originall hath the words in the plurall number, well befitting a ſluggard) *a little folding of the hands to ſleep.* See, how ſpeaking of ſleep, all is in the littles, And though he names ſleepes, yet it is but a little in his conceit. Hee tels not when he will riſe, but he cannot riſe yet, and when he hath had enough & too much already, then he muſt haue a little more, begging for ſleepe as one would begge for bread. He askes a little, becauſe hee would not bee denied. Firſt, hee muſt haue ſleepes, and hauing ſlept, he muſt haue ſlumbers, and hauing ſlumbred, he muſt fold his hands, and rome and tumble himſelfe. Behold a ſleeper in his colours. And mark what anſwere *Salomon* giues, hee ſpends no more time to call him vp, but tels him his doome as he lyes in his bed. *Therefore thy pouertie comes as a trauailer, and thy neceſſity*

as

as an armed man. As if he had ſaid: well, be it ſo, if you will needs, ſleepe on, take your bellie-full of ſleep, but know that ſith you ſhew ſuch skill in begging ſleepe, you muſt euen become a begger for it, ſith you will haue your fill of ſleepe, you ſhall haue little enough of any wealth, pouertie will purſue you, and ouertake you, it will follow you, and ſurpriſe you, it will make haſt and ſtrike home, you cannot runne from it, nor reſiſt it, it comes with ſpeede and with force, it will take you in bed where you cannot flee away from it, nor driue it from you. And what hee ſaith of outward pouertie, is moſt certaine of inward penurie. A ſluggard hath ſo much the leſſe grace, by how much hee hath the more ſleepes and ſlumbers. So the ſame wiſe king hath ſet out a ſluggard in an other place ſaying: That a ſluggard tumbles himſelfe on his bed, as the dore on the hinges. That is, hee is ſtill there, and there muſt be ſuch adoe, before hee can bee remoued from off his couch, as if one were to lift a dore off the hookes, a man muſt come with leauers Pro. 26. 14.

uers to heaue him off. Call him, waken him, bid him riſe, &c. All is little enough to reare him. This ſluggiſh humour (you ſee) is condemned long agoe for a miſpender of time. And ſurely it is not alone very dangerous in regard of the quantitie, and muchneſſe of the time which it filcheth, but alſo in regard of the qualitie and goodneſſe. For it ordinarily feedes gluttonouſly on the very fat of time, it eates the very floure of the day, and conſumes the firſt fruits of our houres: euen the morning ſeaſon. After ſleepe hath made ſtrong what labour hath weakned, after that nature hath beene well refreſhed, & the reuiued ſpirits come with a freſh ſupply of ſtrength and nimbleneſſe to ſerue the body and the minde: then for want of exerciſe all growes dull againe, as a band of Souldiers that grow effeminate by lying in garriſon without labour, all the ſummer. Thus it robs one of the principall and moſt ſeaſonable time, when the minde and body were both in the greateſt fitnes to read, pray, meditate, or to diſpatch and caſt any

matter

matter of ones calling, it is a theefe that robs one, not of his baggage ſtuffe, but euen of his Gold & Iewels. (For ſome time is better then other, as much as ſome mettall is better then others, and this alwayes for the moſt part takes away the moſt precious) yea, it hath one trick as much & more dangerous then the former. If a man giue himſelfe to ſluggiſhneſſe, it will often follow him to Church, and cloſe vp his eyes and eares, both of body and minde from hearing, & marking thoſe moſt wholeſome exhortations, comforts, reproofes and inſtructions, which like ſo many pearles, Gods meſſenger with a liberall hand according to the pleaſure of his Lord, doth ſcatter amongſt men, that who ſo will may take them vp. The time of preaching, and expounding the word with applying it, is the time of harueſt, it is Gods market day, nay, it is his dole or princely congie, when hee giues gifts freely, and thoſe of great worth too, vnto thoſe that will take them. Now can it chooſe but be a great hinderance to a mans eſtate to ſleepe

in harueſt, and to bee in bed at ſuch a time when ſo much wealth is beſtowing. Therefore this ſleepe, you ſee, is a moſt craftie and pernicious deceiuer, and doth with much cunning ouerreach a man, taking from him for the moſt part the morning time, and the time of hearing, two the moſt profitable ſeaſons, and the moſt worthy to bee redeemed of all others. Now againſt the deceit of this falſe companion, a man may defend himſelf by following theſe two rules.

Firſt, it is not lawfull for any man vpon pretence of leaſure from buſineſſe to take more ſleep then is required for the ſtrengthning and refreſhing of his nature. The meaſure of ones ſleepe or lying in bed muſt not be according to ones buſineſſe, but ſo much as his nature requires, for the better enabling of it to performe the duties of his calling, and of religion. In deed a man may and ought to breake his ſleepe, and mynte himſelfe in this regard when important buſineſſe, eyther for the ſoule or body doe preſſe vpon him, but no man muſt

take

take more sleepe then is requisite for the sufficient refreshing of nature vpon vacation of necessary affaires. The reason of this is plaine. It is a sin to straine and stretch naturall things for the setting of lust, beyond that end for which they were created and ordained. Now sleepe and lying in bed was ordained for the strengthning of nature and for the repairing of the spirits diminished by labour, wherefore it must not bee drawen beyond this end to the satisfiing of a sluggish humour. So that as it were a fault for a man to sit, and cram himselfe with meat, till his stomack would turne back the morcels, because no busines did call him from the table: so it is a sinne to giue ones selfe to immoderate sleeping or slugging in bed (as our word is, to sleepe compasse) because no vrgent matter doth call him vp. This is to bee on the bed as a dore on the hinges that one cannot rise till a leauer come, that is, something euen almost of necessitie. It is wicked to surphet on sleepe as well as on meate. So then it shall bee a great helpe against

ſluggiſhneſſe, to know that God allowes not any man to be ſluggiſh, and therefore to accuſtome ones ſelfe to timely riſing. For in this one thing cuſtome hath as much power almoſt as in any thing, ſo that looke what is ones vſe, that hee ſhall hardly refraine. Hee that doth cuſtomably forſake his bed ſo ſoone as hee feeles his nature freſh, and his ſpirits quickned, ſhall with eaſe keepe on in ſo doing. But he that takes libertie to laze himſelfe and dull his ſpirits for lacke of vſe, ſhall finde the more hee ſleepes, the more he ſhall be drowſie, till he become a very ſlaue to his bed, and make ſleepe his maſter. So a healthfull body by confeſsing it to be his duetie, & (through cuſtome though hard at firſt) drawing it vnto a nature may haue the morning at command. And this is the firſt rule.

Secondly, for the time of hearing the word, hee that would not bee troubled with ſuch ſluggiſhnes then muſt looke that hee doe vſe meate, and drinke, and ſleepe moderately in the fit ſeaſon of it, and then ſtriue to quicken himſelfe

ſelfe againſt carnall heauineſſe and ſorrow, by prayer and meditation before hand, which two things will keepe a healthfull body in ſuch good temper that ſleepe ſhall not ordinarily oppreſſe it in this moſt ſacred exerciſe.

Now followes the fourth theefe to bee arraigned, and that is idle thoughts. Mans imaginations will bee working, and toſsing conceits vp and downe almoſt continually. Now all men by nature are ſo tainted with the ſickneſſe of vanitie that their minde will runne willingly after nothing elſe but that which vanitie begets. And for this cauſe men haue taken vp a prouerbe to dazle their eyes (if it might bee) that this might not ſeem a fault. They ſay, that thought is free, as though one ſhould neuer anſwere for idle thoughts. And it is the common excuſe of men to ſay, they thinke no harme, as though it were enough, to hatch no miſcheeuous and harmefull conceites, notwithſtanding they doe exceed in idle and vnprofitable imaginations. Whereby it may bee ſeene that men are ſo farre from reforming

ming this fault, and auoiding this theef, that they will not take it for a fault, nor esteeme it as a theefe of time. But this swallowes vp most of our solitarie houres, when men are in bed, or alone in the night season, and cannot sleepe, or when they be iourneying and walking without companie, they cannot then possibly talke with others when no man is present. Yet their mind doth busie it selfe in idle talking with it selfe, casting a thousand fond things beefore ones eyes, as what if this should bee, or what if that should come to passe, and much a doe to little purpose. This rouing and frisking of the phantasie, like a wanton calfe let loose from the stall, is a fretting worme that eats out a great deale of most mens time, so that they cannot redeeme it, for the profit of their hearts. This puts by good meditations, and suggests fethery light stuffe that hath no good substance in it, froth and foame which is not nourishment to the minde, but rather poyson, in that it fils it full of winde. And a windy heart is no lesse burdensome then a windy stomack,

macke. This casts out the cogitation of Gods benefits that one may not bee thankfull for them; it shoulders away the thought of ones owne sinnes that hee may not renew his Godly sorrow and repentance for them. It iussels out the consideration of Gods graces that wee cannot set our affections on fire to long and labour after them. And in all these respects it takes away the benefit of much good opportunitie. For euery time a man is alone separated from all company and outward businesse, there is an excellent occasion of furthering his owne soule offred vnto him. If any thing greeue him, hee may freely disburden his heart into Gods bosome. If hee faulted any way he may haue full and free scope to confesse and bewaile it, if hee want any good thing, there is leasure and place as in effectuall manner, and with as many words as one can to beg it of the Lord. Thus great riches might come to the soule by a well-spent solitarinesse. But vaine cogitations doe depriue a man of all this, and doe so blow vp the mind with that

which is nothing, as it growes ſwolne, like the fleſh of him which hath the dropſie, ſo that it may well bee called the dropſie of the minde. Now a helpe againſt this vanitie of the minde breaking forth in idle thoughts and fancies; Firſt, wee muſt take the councell of *Salomon, to keepe the heart with all diligence*. The heart is that which muſt be narrowly looked vnto, that euill and vnprofitable thoughts riſe not vp in it. Here muſt bee the ſpeciall care to preuent firſt breeding and engendring of ſinne in the moſt inward parts.

Pro. 4. 23.

This theefe will be ſtill filching and ſtealing time continually, doe what one can. Wherefore a watchfull and warie eye muſt bee had thereunto, and a diligent garde muſt be ſet before the heart, to keepe out ſuch imaginations from entring, as bee like rogues and vagrants worth nothing, and alwaies come to ſteale ſomething. When a man makes conſcience of his thoughts, and obſerues them to what end they tend, this will bee an excellent helpe to keepe them from wandring, whereas if one will follow

low the prouerbe, and esteeme them as free, they will neuer bee kept from a busie fondnesse, like Ants in a mole-hill, that runne vp and downe hither and thither, and doe nothing.

Then in the second place we must labour to be prouided before hand of some profitable matter or subiect, whereunto to bend the thoughts in solitarinesse. Something that tends to the glory of God, and our owne good, eyther in matters of the soule, or the lawfull affaires of the body, must be let into the soule to take vp the roome, and the busie fancies may bee the better stopt out. And indeede the Lord hath prouided a Christian of good store of such matter, if hee bee not wanting to himselfe. For there is nothing that offers it selfe to any of our sences, which doth not also offer to our minde (if it were not starke blinde) some glorious attribute of God to bee seene and considered of. So that to want occasion of good thoughts in this varietie of matter, is to want light at noonetide, that proceeds from nothing but from want

of eyes. But this is a great help to him that can ſee to ſet his ſoule a work firſt on the good things. For if one haue let his heart looſe at firſt, he ſhall not (without much paines and toyle) catch it againe, and haue it within command. Thus doeing, a great part of vaine cogitations ſhall be cut off.

Now comes to be handled the fift and worſt of all the fiue conſumers of time, which is ſo much the more dangerous, becauſe it is in ſome honeſt reckning among moſt men, and is eſteemed as the right Lord and true owner of that time which for the moſt part it holds by vſurpation and iniurie. This is the immoderate care of the world, and of things of this life, though in themſelues honeſt and lawfull, when a man doth winde himſelfe into ſuch a laborinth and maze of affaires, as hee can not get out at fit times to ſpirituall and religious duties, at leaſt not to thoſe which are priuate, when the heart is ſo ſurcharged with bargaines, and purchaſes, and bying and ſelling, and building, and ſuch like, that God and goodneſſe,

Chriſt,

Christ, and Saluation, heauen, and hell come not into a mans minde once in a day, scarce once in a weeke, or at least, if they come, they bee quickly shut out, and haue no long, nor quiet entertainement there, when the soule is ouerwhelmed with the names of caring, thinking, deuising and striuing how to grow great here, and is so tossed in the gulfe of earthly matters, that it cannot come to land (as it were) to settle it selfe in any proportion to thinke how it may grow great in heauen, and how it may get possession of the true treasure. This is a wonderous consumer of good houres, digging them all into the dunghill of this world. Christ findes fault with this in the parable. Mat. 22.

The men bidden to the feast had farmes, and Oxen, and wiues, and such matters in hand (businesse forsooth of more importance then so) and therefore could not come. And the thornie ground had so much carking and caring, how to liue, that it doth euen choake the word, the good seede could not grow thereby. And the Lord complains Mat. 13.

of

Hag.1.23. of them of the captiuitie of Iudah, that they could find time to build their owne houſes, yea and to ſeele them too, but they ſaid, it was not time to build the houſe of God. So this ſinne doth ingroſe all the time to it ſelfe, and will not giue elbow roome to any good exerciſe, eſpecially to any priuate exerciſes, without which the publike are but as meate without digeſtion. And yet it comes like an honeſt and approueable thing, painted with the name of thriftineſſe and paines in ones lawfull calling. To fence our ſelues againſt this rauenous and lurking fault, wee muſt binde our ſelues to theſe three rules, which all depend vpon the rule of Mat.6.33. Chriſt that bids vs firſt ſeeke the kingdome of God, firſt, in time, and firſt in 20.ver. affection. And againe, *Lay vp your treaſure in heauen.* Hence I ſay, three rules may bee collected, to which hee that would not bee ſpoyled of good occaſions to the ſoule by worldlineſſe, muſt more and more frame himſelfe and his life.

The firſt is, that no man ſuffer him-

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ſelfe to enter vpon ſo many buſineſſes, or any ſo egerly, as that his ordinary affaires ſhould hinder himſelfe or his familie from the performance of ordinary religious exerciſes. The common and daily matters of this world in any mans calling whatſoeuer, ſhould not draw him or his familie from common and daily duties of religion, ſuch are reading, praying, meditating, and religious obſeruing of the Sabboth. For here a man muſt take care for his houſhold as well as for himſelfe that hee do not hinder them from taking conuenient time to pray, and read, &c. by forcing vpon them an ouer great burthen of ordinary buſineſſe. For if the ſoule bee to bee preferred before the body, and heauen before earth, then thoſe cuſtomable matters that pertaine to the ſauing of the ſoule, muſt be ſet before, muſt more ſtand equall with the things that pertaine to the body. Secondly, the extraordinarie workes of our calling (if any fall out) muſt not barre vs from the extraordinary workes of religion. As for example, harueſt, and hay-time or the like,

like, are extraordinary times for the buſineſſe for the body: ſo preparation to the Sacrament, faſting (if neede ſo require) and ſuch like, are extraordinary works for the ſoule. Now the care of inning ones corne or graſſe muſt not keepe him from taking time to prepare himſelfe to the Sacrament, or to faſt at his neede. So the receiuing of the Lords Supper is matter of more then ordinary vſe for the ſoule, and ſome needfull iournie ſtands in the like manner for the body. But a man muſt rather defer his iournie (if it may be put of without ouer much hinderance to him) then omit the receiuing of the Lords ſupper. The ſame rule muſt be kept in al other particulars. For if the ſoule bee more worth, & muſt be more carefully attēded on thē the body (as it is no reaſon the hand-maide ſhould take place of the miſtriſſe) then thoſe things which doe after a peculiar manner concerne the good and profit thereof, muſt not bee neglected for ſuch as doe more ſpecially help the ſtate of the body outwardly. Laſtly, if ſome outward dutie of religion

ligion haue beene put of from the time wherin it ſhould be performed by ſome ſuddaine and vnexpected buſines that requred ſuch haſt (as in ſuch caſe ordinary duties of religion may be deferred) then ſome ordinary buſineſſe of leſſe waight muſt in recompence giue place to that exerciſe afterwards, and a man muſt finde time for that, whether it bee reading, praying, or meditating, by leauing vndone (for that ſpace) ſomething that may be better ſpared. And thus you haue heard what be thoſe ſpeciall euils which lye in wait to couſin vs of our good time, & how they may be preuented. And ſo ỹ firſt point is hādled, namely, from what time is to be redeemed.

Now follows to ſhew what it is that is to be redeemed, and ſo you ſhall fully know wherein this duety conſiſts. Now by time the Apoſtle meanes two things. Firſt, the very paſsing away of houres and minutes, the ſpace and leaſure of any thing. And ſecondly, the good occaſions or oportunities, that fall out in this ſpace. For the word in the originall ſignifies not alone the very

ſliding

ſliding of minutes, but the ſpace conſi-
dered alſo with ſome ſpeciall fitnes that
it hath for ſome good, which we call the
ſeaſon of it. Now for the firſt, it ſhall not
be needfull to ſay any more, being that
euery one knows, that euery thing muſt
haue ſome ſpace wherein to bee done.
And he that will auoid the fiue forena-
med euils, ſhall neuer want time or the
ſpace wherein to doe or get good. But
for the occaſions & fit oportunities that
fall out, now for this, now for that, in
this ſpace, it is ſome more skill to finde
them out and make vſe of them. Now
theſe ſeaſons are all of two ſorts. Firſt,
ſuch whereby a man may more eaſily
get ſome good to himſelfe. Secondly,
ſuch whereby a man may with more
fitnes and eaſe doe ſome good. Of the
firſt ſort, namely, ſeaſonable opportuni-
ties to get good, I will name three par-
ticulars which are moſt needfull to bee
conſidered, and by proportion of which
any man may come to the knowledge
of other like. The firſt, when God con-
tinues the Goſpell, offring dayly the
word and Sacraments, & calling to re-
pentance

pentance and amendment of life. This is the ſeaſon of repenting, this is the harueſt wherein we may reape Chriſt, if we be not negligent. This is the acceptable yeer of the Lord in which one ſhall be receiued if hee returne. Whilſt wiſdome lifts vp her voice, whilſt her meſſengers come daily to inuite vs, whilſt her gates ſtand open, & her dinner ſtands ready dreſt, whilſt her meſſage is done vnto vs, all this time, if a man will ſtriue and endeuour to turne from his ſin, to leaue his folly, & forſake his ſcorning, hee ſhall bee a welcome gueſt, ſhe will accept him, help him, and giue him an increaſe of grace, till he be become ſtrong with her meates. Whoſoeuer liues vnder the preaching of the Goſpell, hath this priuiledge annexed to the outward teaching, that if he will but ſtriue and pray to God to giue him ſtrength to repent and amend his waies and to turne to him, God will (vpon his promiſe) heare his prayers and aſsiſt him, but when the Goſpell is gone then the date is paſt, a man may call, and not be heard, and cry, and not be regarded.

So then euery man redeemes this ſeaſon of the Goſpell, when he giues himſelfe to conſider ſereouſly of thoſe faults which he findes in himſelfe, and heares ſharply reproued in the word, & hereupon reſolues to forſake them, & doth alone doe his owne beſt indeuour, but earneſtly cals vpon God for his help, without which his power is but weakneſſe & ineffectuall, when he doth alſo duely ponder vpon the holy commandements that he heares preſſed, & thoſe exhortations that are daily ſounded in his eares to moue him to do ſuch duties as god requires, & hereupon concludes with himſelfe to ſet about this worke, and craues the ſtrength of God to beare him through in the ſame. And when he doth aduiſedly thinke of the promiſes that are generally proclaimed, and labours to get ſome aſſurance that hee is ſuch a one to whom the right of theſe promiſes appertaine. Thus doing, I ſay, one redeemes the time wiſely, & makes his aduantage of the Goſpell while it continues, which is a thing that all men ſhould do, but ſo rare in the world

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as that it is wonder the Lord hath so patiently continued his louing voice, when men scoffe at it and will not heare. The Lord hath and doth send his prophets amongst vs, as he did among the Iewes, rising vp early, and sending them which with all earnestnesse doe proclaime the dangerous euent that shall follow vpon prophanenesse, neglect and contempt of Gods word, breaking of his Sabboth, railing, wrathfulnesse, whordome, wantonnes, couetousnesse, theeuing, oppressing, slandering, lying, and the like. Yet how many run on in these euils presumtuously, rushing like the horse into the battaile with an vnreasonable boldnesse not fearing any danger, and shutting their eares against these reproofes as the deafe Adder doth, that they may not be moued by them to amendment. Ah, how contrary is this to redeeming the time. If any man haue hitherto lost the season, let him now grow wise, and euen at this time turne to God, and beg power to forsake these sins. How often & how earnestly are men exhorted to all good works by the continuall

voice of God ſpeaking vnto thē by his ſeruants, to read the word of God daily, to pray priuately, to meditate vpon the word, to watch ouer their daies, & to cal themſelues to a reckning euery day for the faults cōmitted in the day. Yet who regards this voice, who marks theſe exhortations, wher is one that hath inioyned himſelf to ſome conſtancie in praying, reading, and the forenamed duties? This is to ſleep in harueſt, a moſt fooliſh practice & vnwiſe, wherfore whilſt there is yet a little time left, whilſt wee haue the light, let vs walke in it, that we be not ouertaken with darknes. He that hath not yet begun, let him bee ſorry that he hath put it off ſo late, and now ſet foot into theſe waies of God whilſt God ſets out his word as a candle to direct him, & as his hand to lead him by. The promiſes of God are in like ſort publiſhed amongſt vs. Happines is held vp as a reward of all true hearted chriſtians, and the crowne of life is propoſed to thoſe which are ſound and faithfull members of Ieſus Chriſt. And yet as though all were ſure to get it, or it were

wer not worth seeking by any, the most men flatter themselues in their sins, and will needs promise these good things to themselues, when they haue no assurace or proofe out of gods word, wherby to lay claim or title to them. This is a greeuous & a dãgerous neglecting of time. And if any haue not yet made sure work this way, let him euen now set about it whilst the world as a touchstone is before him, by which he may try himselfe, and which will make him such a one as he should be, if he will striue to follow it, and pray for abilitie to be ruled by it. So then whilst God holds out his benefits and stands with his armes open to accept vs, let vs take his benefis, and be perswaded to come vnto him in good earnest, let it be too late to trauaile when midnight shall come in stead of noone day. This is the first and cheefest oportunitie of getting good, namely, to ioine with the gospell and follow it with our endeuours and praiers by which it shal be made effectuall vnto vs. The second opportunitie of getting good is in time of youth and health, whilst the vigor &

ſtrength of the body and mind is fit for labour and capable of inſtruction. And *Salomon* in his booke of penance, *viz.* Eccleſ,12.1 *Eccleſiaſtes*, bids remember the creatour in the dayes of youth beefore the euill daies come. Theſe daies of youth and health are good daies when hee which wil vſe them, hath his memory ſtedfaſt to call to minde his euill waies that he may bewaile them, and to treaſure vp good inſtructions & promiſes that may guide and comfort him, when the lims will ioyne with the mind, and the mind hath the body as a fit inſtrumēt to ſeek the kingdome of heauen, if a man will addreſſe himſelfe vnto it, but the dayes of old age and ſicknes faile much of the commodious fitnes for good. The memory is cracked, the head and vnderſtanding is weak, & eſpecially the time of ſicknes is ſo filled with paine, ſo ſhaken with diſtractions, and incumbred with greefes & ſorrows, that one is nothing fit to repent, or pray, or heare, or to do any ſuch thing. Now when a man in the prime of his daies and in the fulneſſe of his health, will giue himſelfe

to ſeeke heauen, will heare the word, & meditate vpon it, & apply it to himſelf, will confeſſe his ſins, and force himſelfe to bewaile them, will pray to God for good things, and ſet the whole courſe of his life in a right frame, he hath well taken the opportunitie, & he ſhall haue reſt in his latter dayes, much quiet and contentment, at leaſt, much ſtrength & aſsiſtance in his ſickneſſe, becauſe hee hath ſomthing in ſtore againſt the time of want. But alas, how doe the common ſort of men bewray their monſtrous folly in this behalfe? What more common then that ſottiſh & brutiſh ſpeech, at leaſt ſuch ignorant and prophane thoughts, men will repent when they be old, and cry God mercie when they feel themſelues ſick, & amend all when they be ready to go out of the world. And fooliſh man, thou knoweſt not whether thou ſhalt dye ſuddainly, whether thou ſhalt haue thy wits and ſences, or whether thou ſhalt haue power of heart to make the leaſt colour of repentance in thoſe extremities. How many haue died ſuddainly? How many ſottiſhly? And

yet how do men for all theſe warnings defer the beſt buſines, namely, the work of repentance, & turning to God, which will require the whole ſtrength of the ſoule to the worſt and moſt craſie time of ſickneſſe or old age? As if a priſoner at what time a man was offring him a pardon, and calling vpon him to take it ſome good ſpace beefore the Aſsiſes, ſhould ſay: Nay, let me alone, I will not looke after my pardon till immediately before I am to come before the iudge. This were a moſt fond part, eſpecially, if it were ſo that theefe knew not whether or no the next day ſhould be the day of his arraignement: ſo the caſe ſtands betwixt the Lord and vs. If any man therefore haue beene ſo little carefull of his owne eternall good, as to put off repentance and conuerſion till that dead time, or doth foſter any ſuch harmefull conceit in his heart, let him now caſt it out, & now that he hath his health and ſtrength, vpon better deliberation take in hand this work. Be not ſo extreemely mad, as to giue more time to the diuell, then to God, eſpecially to

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giue the principall time. He were a foo-
lish trauailer that would willingly gal- Mimesis.
lop all the day quite cõtrary to his way, Sayle. Hind my soule
& being told of it would answere, when
it drawes towards Sun-set, I will turne
into the right way. Why bee men thus
blockish for their soules, that knowing
themselues to be out of the way to life,
will yet of purpose deferre to set their
feete into the right path till sickneſſe or
age, when the sunne of their life is at the
point of setting. Ah, let our proue1be
teach vs more wit: Make hay while the
Sun shines. Turne, turne, whilst thou
hast health and strength, vse all to get
repentance & saluation. The last cheef 3 //.
opportunitie of getting good, is, when
a man hath company, and is in the so-
cietie of some godly wise man, able to
giue sound councell and direction, able
to answere all doubts, obiections, and
scruples of ones minde; now there is a
fit opportunitie to grow in wisdome, to
be resolued of all doubts, and to seeke
direction. So then a man ought not to
suffer bashfulnes, or other foolish mat-
ters to put by that good communicati-

on whereby he might enrich his ſoule. It it a ſpeciall fauour of God that anie man can come where his ſeruants are, that haue excellent gifts, and hee doth depriue himſelfe of much good that wil not ſeeke to benefit himſelfe by them. When the woman of Samaria perceiued Chriſt to be a Prophet, ſhe propoſed her doubt vnto him albeit he was a ſtranger. When *Iohn* Baptiſt might be come to, the Publicans & ſinners came and asked what they ſhould do. Whilſt the Iayler had *Paul* in his keeping, he came to aske that needefull queſtion: What ſhall I doe to be ſaued? So if there be any man whoſe heart is perplexed with ſome doubt, or ouerburdened with ſome temptation, or ouermaſtered by ſome ſin, it is a part of good diſcretion for ſuch a one to go and ſeek the aduice of ſome able Chriſtian or wiſe man, before that eyther himſelfe be too far gone, or he want the opportunitie of ſuch a councellor or helper. Theſe be three ſpeciall occaſions of obtaining good to a mans own ſoule from things without him. In all which to take

the time is a moſt commendable point of wiſedome, but to be negligent is ſuch folly as *Salomon* reproues whē he ſaith: *That a foole hath a price in his hand to get wiſdome, but hee wants a heart.* Oh that men would beware of this hartleſneſſe, and take heed of looſing their price by which they might get wiſdome.

Now I come to ſpeake of the occaſions of doing good. And theſe are eyther in others or in our ſelues. Firſt, in others, and that for their ſoule & body. Sometimes a man ſhall finde a kinde of tractableneſſe in thoſe with whom hee hath to deale that their eares ſtand open, and they are readie to drink in an exhortation or reproof by reaſon of ſome affliction that is vpon them, or ſome need they haue of our help, or ſuch like occaſion. Here is time for a kinde and ſound admonition, then a man ought in all loue, and yet with all plainneſſe to follow the occaſion, ſtriking (as our prouerbe is) whilſt the iron is hot, ſpeaking when he ſees him in the melting vaine, ready to take all wel, and in good part. And ſo *Elihu* notes, that when a man

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is bought to his death bed, and to abhor all worldly delights, then his eares are bored, and then there is work for an interpreter. Before the bones clattered, and the mourners looked for the funerall, an interpreter was despised, but now his words are obserued. Thus a man may doe much good to his neighbours or seruants soule, if he waite for a time when he is fit to receiue admonition, & then giue it him, as the husbandman in dry weather waites for a showre of raine, and then sets in his plow. Againe,

b. for the body, sometimes one shall meet with one that hath true need, that is in distresse for his bodily estate, and doth indeed want reliefe. This is an occasion and fit time to shew liberalitie. Now a man must open his purse, and be ready to giue freely, I meane not, that euery time a man meetes a beggar he should be giuing (for to those a man should not giue, but in the very extremitie of necessitie) but if our brother hath beene afflicted by any losse through fire, or such like (that he doe not make himself needy by idlenesse, but it comes vpon

him

him by ſome hand of God) here is an obiect fit for mercy, and here one may, by ſeaſonably liberal, here is an altar, offer the Sacrifice of almes vpon it, which is a thing wherewith God is well pleaſed. Some other time, ſparing may bee more fit, but now is a ſeaſon to be more free of gift and open handed. There is an occaſion of doing good offred in others wherein I haue named theſe two particulars that euery man might accordingly take notice of other like. The 2. there is alſo occaſion of doing good offred in ones ſelfe, whether by ſome outward thing, that befals him, or by ſome inward ſtirring of the minde and affections. As outwardly when a time comes a in, wherin we haue receiued ſome more ſpeciall benefit, this ſhould prouoke vs to more thankfulnes by remembrance of the benefit. Thus this time of Chriſts natiuitie ſhould (if any way) be celebrated, that it might turne to an occaſion of more hartie thankſgiuing, & more true obedience vnto Chriſt that gaue himſelf for our ſins, and tooke our nature vpon him that in it hee might beare our iniquities

quities. So when we be in the enioying of gods creatures, whilst we be eating & drinking or such like, here is a speciall season to lift vp the heart to God, & to kindle a flame of praise by this fewell, that our thanks might be so much the more earnest, by how much we haue a more present feeling of Gods mercie, and doe euen tast how good he is. On the other side a man is sometimes pressed with a sore crosse & affliction that pincheth his soule, here is a very fit occasion of humbling ones selfe, and examining ones heart. For in these afflictions god cals to humiliation for the most part, which dutie being performed after a man may reioyce in his affliction. But whiles the burden of the crosse is heauie here is a notable meanes to further one in the work of humiliation, and if one can take the time when God smites he may (at least he ought) cause his hart to stoup before him with more ease, then when he was at more ease, for his body. Againe, sometimes a man hath a more inward stirring of his affections which he cannot haue at an other time.

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This must be followed greedily taken, sometimes at the sermon, or vpon some other occasion, a man hearing or thinking of his sin, and the punishment due thereunto, haue a kind of pricking in his heart, and some touch of remorse within him, his conscience begins to tel him that all is not well, & he growes to some orderly conclusion: Sure I wil now be sorrie for this fault, & amend it. Now if one will follow this motion, & go after god when he cals (for this is one of his inward callings) and not shoulder it out with fond mirth, but nourish it by a plain confession of his sin to God, & an harty begging of grace & strength from him to do that which he now sees he should doe; this will come to godly sorrow, and so to repentance, but else if he choake it and quench it, it will vanish, and the hart will be more hard frozen in the dregs of sin. So that if there be any whose heart at this time at the speaking of these words, whose soule smites him for his swearing, lying, sabboth breaking, whordome, drūkennes, gameming, couetousnes, railing, or the like sin, let him when hee

he is gone out of the Chruch, cast him-
selfe downe in the presence of God, con-
fesse this his sinne or sins freely without
dissembling, labour to be more sorrow-
full for them then euer he was, and pray
to god to pull him out of this mire. This
if he doe, he shall take the time, he shall
be a conuert, the Lord will receiue him,
as the vnthriftie prodigall son was re-
ceiued, & by redeeming the time he shal
find redemption to his soule. But if hee
despise this admoniton of God, his soule
shal be more seared then before, his hart
shall be deliuered to a greater of hard-
nes and senceles nes then euer before, &
so be further of from repentance & life.
But alas, the frantick dealing of men in
this case is too palpable, & to be straun-
ged at, when Gods word strikes vpon
them, when they feele the keennesse of
it, when the threatnings haue cut, so that
they smart for it; then they run to dicing,
carding, drinking, dancing, &c. as it wer
of set purpose to driue away the spirit of
God that was comming towards them
to heale their soule. None is so mad to
take such courses for his body, that whē
soul
he

he feels the ſore to ſmart, then to run frō the Phiſition, and couer it ouer with a clout, or ſtriue to forget it, yet for their ſoules a number deale ſo ſenceleſly in this thing as much as in any other, verifying that name which the holy Ghoſt hath giuen vnto him, whē he termes mad men. For it is a property peculiar to a mad man that feeling paine he will hate the Phiſition & run away from him that would help. Oh, that thoſe of vs which haue hitherto beene ſo mad would returne now to our right minds, & to God to be healed. Againe, ſometimes a mans heart is ſtirred vp with an inward and ſecret reioycing or gladnes. Then ſaith S. *Iames*. *If any man be merry let him ſing Pſalmes*. Now he ſhall do it with a cheerfull courage indeed. And therefore *Dauid* would in ſuch a caſe riſe at midnight to ſing a Pſalme rather then hee would looſe the ſeaſon whē it would reliſh with him ſo well. Sometimes alſo, a man or a woman ſhall feele a ſecret penſiueneſſe growing ouer his heart, ſo that it euen melts as the ground that thawes after a froſt, & he could euen weep abundantly, teares Iames. 5. 13

teares offer themſelues in a ful meaſure. Here is an excellent occaſion of renuing ones repentance. Now whateuer be ones companie, whateuer bee the matter in hand, except it be of abſolute neceſsitie, let him leaue it of, and betake him to his chamber or ſome ſecret, now let him fall on his knees, now let him opē his mouth and acknowledge his ſins againſt himſelfe, giuing vent to his greefe, and turning all to Godly ſorrow, whatſoeuer the occaſion was at firſt. Thus if any body doe, his repentance ſhall receiue a notable encreaſe. But if he paſſe it ouer, his heart will not anſwere his deſire an other time. Furthermore ſometimes a mans heart is earneſtly moued with ſome hungry deſire to inioy ſome grace of God, and great longing after ſome chriſtian vertue. Now let him in the heat & flame of his deſire addreſſe himſelfe to prayer. Then one ſhall ſend vp ſuch peircing cries, and giue ſuch aloud knock againſt the gates of Chriſts mercie, that he can not chuſe but heare, and ſend one back with an almes, as it were. Thus hee redeems the time. But elſe his deſires will

be

be ſo cold & chil at an other time that he ſhall ſearce thruſt a petition out of his lips, & then theſe drop down at his feet, and do him little good. And thus in euery other thorow the turning of our affections we muſt follow gods ſpirit, yea, or nature when it leads vs, wiſely turning all to ſpirituall vſes. And thus you may perceiue what it is to redeeme the time, and how it may be attayned. Now let vs come to ſome breife application of the point.

Vſe. Firſt, this point thus explaned meets with a number of imperfections euen in the beſt, & him that is moſt careful of his waies, of which we are now to take notice, & purpoſe amēdmēt, if we haue not hitherto conſidered of them. For this is a fault to which a man (euen in a good meaſure ſpirituall) is ſubiect for want of redeeming the time, that he comes to that lazie paſſe now and then as he hath nothing to do, nothing where about to ſettle himſelfe. It is a carnall vnſetlednes in a chriſtian to be ſo negligent of his time, as that he ſhuld haue any minute of time which he knows not how to beſtow vp-

pon ſome good and profitable vſe. The Lord offers ſuch a multitude of occaſions to do and receiue good that if we could with wiſdome take thē, there is no houre paſſeth vs, in which we might not do or get ſome good. And if there be nothing elſe yet this is ſomthing where about he hath good occaſion to be buſied euen to fall out with himſelf, becauſe he hath nothing (I meane hee ſees nothing that hee hath) to do. Somtimes if men ſee their ſeruants ſtanding idle & vnbuſied, they can aske thē with a kind of indignatiō, what? Can you finde you nothing to doe? And ſure the Lord might come with this queſtion diuers times to vs, and ſay as it is in the parable: *Why ſtand you all the day idle?* asking whether the world were ſo empty of occaſions, & our ſelues ſo perfectly wel, as that we can find nothing to do? But there is no houre paſſeth vs which wee ſhould not finde fit for ſome good thing, if we could catch the opportunitie before it be turned, and did not harme our ſelues for want of diligent redeeming the time. Yet there are other faults of which chriſtians are to be warned. As

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to begin with the laſt firſt: How many be there that are ſo ſtuffed with worldly buſineſſes, and yet are greedy of more, as that they cannot find leaſure one houre in a day, nay ſcarce in a week, to beſtow vpon reading, praying, meditating or cō-ferring. Yea, as though time were made for nothing but to ſeeke wealth & tranſitorie things, ſo this the cheefeſt of their care. It appeares that ſuch labor not for conſcience but for gaine, becauſe they cannot breake of ordinary labors ſo long, as wel to performe ordinary duties of religion. Many may ſay (with greef inough if they did wel) that their hands are ſo ful of the world as that they can ſcarce thorow the weeke take the Bible into their hands to read any thing therein, vnleſſe perhaps it be in the church at ſome publique meeting. Thus men which are born to a better inheritāce are content to wear out themſelues in the earth, as if they were to periſh in the earth with other baſer creatures. Here is one fault to be amended then, let no chriſtian beſtow ſo much time in the world, as that he can not find ſufficient to ſeek heauen & the

things thereof. Then for the matter of ſports, me thinks ſome chriſtians ſhould euen ſhrink before the word of reproofe comes to them, when they may think of ſo many houres ſpent ſuch a day at bowels, ſo many, it may be, the next day in ſhooting, ſo many the third day in ſhouell bord, or the like exerciſes, happily in themſelues not vnlawfull, & when they come to reckning for religious exerciſes, the count comes in very ſlowlie, by the minutes or quarters, ſome halfe quarter of an houre or there abouts beſtowed ſuch a day in praying alone, and ſome three or foure dayes after about a quarter of an houre in reading, & (it may be) the next weeke, ſome halfe quarter more in meditation. And thus if the expences of time were written in our bebt bookes, as they be in Gods, we might euen bluſh to read, ſo many items, for pleaſure & ſport, and ſcarce one or two in a ſide for priuate religious exerciſes. Then for our words: May we not hang down our heads with ſhame to think that god made our tongues, and we ſpeak ſcarce one word in an hũdred to his glory. Idle

words: Euen many of thoſe whom wee are to regard as chriſtians count them no faults, neuer come to repent for them. It was but a word out of the way, ſay they. But this power to ſpeak (being a gift peculiar to men aboue all beaſts) ought to be more preciouſly regarded, then that that it ſhould bee abuſed for baſe trifles. Then for idle thoughts; who makes queſtion of them almoſt? Alas, we do not remember that God hath ſearching eyes and feirce, which peirce into the depth of one ſoule. We dreame that thoughts are not ſo much, and ſpare our ſelues in our vnthriftines when we ſhould deale more religiouſly with our ſelues. Laſtly, ſome might be reproued for too long lying in bed, & ſpending more houres in ſlugging or ſleeping, then health & ſtrength doe repuire. Many perhaps will thinke that it is left to their owne pleaſure, and that the Preacher is too buſie, if he take vpon him to teach them when to riſe, as though it were no fault to ouer-ſleepe themſelues. In deed ſome old and ſickly mens bodies muſt take it when they may, but for the greateſt part of men, if they

knew what good the firſt halfe houre of the early morning ſpent in religious exercíſes would, bring them, they would not loue ſleepe ſo well, as for it to neglect them. It is well ſaid: *Hee that ſeekes me early ſhall finde me*, and it may well be literally vnderſtood. Therfore brethren, there is none but may ſee a fault in himſelfe in theſe reſpects, ſome or al of them, and happy is he that reſolues to mend it. Therefore if you will take good counſell, doe thus when you come hóme. Thinke, alaſſe, if time muſt be reckned for, & ſhould be redeemed; How far am I behinde hand with God, that (what for ſleepe, what for play, what for idle babling, what for vaine thoughts, and exceſſiue worldlineſſe) I cannot make a good account of the fourtith, yea, of the hundreth part of my time? And then greeue becauſe thou haſt beene ſuch an vnthrift of time, & now begin carefully to ſpare before all be gone. But now here is a reproofe more ſharp for ſome others that are not willing to heare of that eare, tell them they muſt not ſpend a whole day, or a whole night in playing & ſporting.

What

What not at Christmas, (say they?) why you are too precise: well, but yet vouchsafe to consider a little what God speaks. Thou sayest: this is too much precisenes, and so saith the world; but the Apostle bids to walke precisely or warily, redeeming the time. And hee that will take time to card or dice, and to vse lawfull recreations immoderately (I meane so as to be at his play the greater part of the day, and it may be some, if not the most of the night too) shall pay full dearely for it. Either he must repent, & vndo this with much greef and sorrow of heart, or els he must smart for it hereafter worse in hell. I would not deale ouer sharply with thee: but take Gods louing admoniton, and let him haue one tenth part of the foure & twentie houres, yea more a good deale then so, now that thou hast more leasure then ordinarie.

And here is yet a kinde of people that are to be more rigorously handled, such as are all gamesters, that spend no one houre waking but vpon pleasure. The world cals them scatter-goods, and the Lord will call them scatter-houres, that

do misspend both goods & houres. Such (let them think of themselues how they will) as doe make gameing the greatest part (if not all) of their occupation, must bee content to heare that they haue no portion in heauen, as they can keepe no portion in earth. How can one haue treasure in heauen, that neuer laid vp any there. If God hate a gamester, so that he wil not giue him good cloths to his back (now he hath threatned that he shall be clothed with rags) he will much lesse afford them a seate in heauen. And howsoeuer for a time they may ruffle it out, & be clad better then their more laborious neighbors, yet this trade wil surely vndoe them. For they haue brought this perill vpon thēselues, that either God must not be true, or they must not be rich, he must forfaite his truth, or they their goods, besides their name and soule: wherefore let such as haue hitherto giuen their dayes to such an vnsanctified, and inordinate course, surcease from the practise of their lewdnes, and both in conscience for their soules sake, & in discretiō for their goods sake, resolue to become better husbands

of

of time, leaſt their gameing on earth bring beggery to their latter dayes, and damnation to their ſoules for euer. Laſtly, let all good Chriſtians be admoniſhed to make precious account of their time, and with much carefulneſſe to take the ſeaſons and opportunities of God, according as they haue heard it is their dutie. Chriſtians either indeede purpoſe to learne, or elſe make a ſhew of ſuch a purpoſe when they come to church. Ah, that we might all learne this thrift, and practiſe it as we haue heard. Begin to day, and hold on ſtill, now is a time of remembring the moſt admirable work of Chriſts incarnation, when he was made fleſh of the Virgin, to purge vs from ſin, and ſaue vs from wrath by the ſhedding of his bloud, and ſuffrings which he endured in his fleſh. Giue not all (ah, why ſhould we giue any of it?) this time to play, cheefly to bezelling, ſurpleting, or wantonnes, but take ſome ſpace to conſider of the greatnes of this benefite, and to be thankfull proportionablie thereunto. I would I might hope to preuaile with any by this exhortation, but howſoeuer

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euer it is needfull to be ſpoken, that none may haue occaſion to pretend ignorance, you ſee or might ſee your duties in this beehalfe, and in practiſing the ſame ſhall finde the benefite of it. But fooles will ſcorne admonition, and thoſe that haue abandoned themſelues to luſt, will not bee intreated to pull their necks from out their hard yoake, and to ſerue a better Maſter. Nay, ſo fooliſh are a number, that they thinke to doe Chriſt great honour in ſpending the day, whereon they imagine that hee was borne, and ſome few that follow it in more then ordinary riot and ſinfull exceſſe: as though hee were a God that loued iniquities, and were delighted with drinking and ſwilling, and gameing, and ſwearing, and ſurpheting, and all diſorder. But thoſe that know Chriſt, know full well that hee is not pleaſed with ſuch pranks. Wherefore if wee will ſpend a day to Chriſt, ſpend it more religiouſly, and ſoberly then all other dayes, not more profanely and luxuriouſly. Wee ſhould neuer forget his birth, but when wee obſerue

ſerue ſome ſpeciall time of remembring it, ſhew that wee remember his goodneſſe by doing good, more honour to his name, not by committing more rebellion againſt him. And to conclude, as at this time, ſo at all times let all men that would haue their ſoules well furniſhed with inward ſubſtance, play the good husbands in taking time and opportunitie whenſoeuer wee finde any fit occaſion of getting or doing good, in our ſelues or others, let it not ſlip, but lay hold vpon it, and vſe it. It is ioyfull to thinke (if wee could thinke of it ſeriouſly) what commoditie this thrift would bring, how much knowledge and godlineſſe might hee get that would keepe his tongue and heart carefully to good matters? What a large treaſure of good workes might hee haue, that would bee ready whenſoeuer his neighbours neceſsitie called for helpe, to ſtretch out his hand for his reliefe? And when hee ſaw him fit for an admonition would wiſely beſtow it vpon him? How full of grace ſhould his old age and ſickneſſe bee, that would giue

his

his health to God, and his first yeares to the seruice of his soule? How great acquaintance might hee get in the pallace of wisedome, that would come to her at her first call, and enter so soone as the doores were set open? How many sinnes might a man leaue, and how much power should hee get ouer all sinne that when his heart smites him, would turne to God by prayer and confession? What great grace would affliction bring, if a man would settle himselfe to humiliation, and gaging his heart in time of affliction? How much thankefulnesse might hee haue that would lift vp his heart to God in the fruition of euerie blessing? How many feruent prayers might he store vp in heauen, that would not fore-slow time, when he feels his desires earnest? How comfortably might wee weepe ouer Christ, and how plentifully, that would take the tyde of teares, and turne all pensiuenesse to this vse? And how many sweete and cheerefull Psames might a Christian sing, if hee vvould turne all his mirth into a Psalme, and offer

it vp to God? Oh, what a large increaſe of grace would this care bring, how ſhould his ſoule thriue that would bee thus husbandly? Surely as the common ſpeech hath commẽded a little land well tilled, beefore much more ground that is careleſſie dreſſed: ſo the weaker meanes with this care, would bee more auaileable to inrich the heart, then are the ſtrongeſt without it. It is not the greatneſſe of ones liuing that makes one rich, but the good imploying, and wary husbanding of it. So it is not the greatneſſe of the meanes, but the diligent redeeming of time, to make vſe of the means that makes the ſoule wealthy. But if great meanes ioyne with great care, the increaſe will bee ſo much the more large, as a large liuing with good husbandry. But alaſſe, hence comes it that ſome in the ſtore of all good meanes of Saluation are very beggars and bankrupts, becauſe of their negligence to take the time and fit ſeaſon. They let paſſe all good opportunities, and care not for any occaſion for the ſoule, and how can their ſoule thriue?

Where-

78 The redemption of time.

Wherefore let every true hearted Christian learne this wisedome and practise it, if ever hee desires to store his soule with that wealth which will make him glorious in the eyes of God, and worth set by euen in heauen among the Angels. And thus much for this time, and this duetie of redeeming the time.

FINIS.